KING WINTER

To Lucy
from
Sebra on
9th birthday
1859

The sky is dull and grey,
Piercing and chill the blast,
Each step resounds on the frosty ground,
Winter is come at last.

Mamma sits by the fire
Her little ones round her knees.
"How cosy we are, Mamma," they cry,
"Tell us something, if you please."

"Tell us about King Winter,
And about Jack Frost, his man;
We 'll not be noisy or naughty at all,
But as good as ever we can."

"Well then;" says mamma, "you, Jenny,
May knit and listen, my dear;
And Johnny may split up wood, to make
The fire burn bright and clear."

King Winter dwells in the North;
Far away in the Frozen Zone,
In a palace of snow he holds his court,
And sits on an icy throne.

He has cushions of course: his Queen
Made them out of her wedding gown.
Stuffing them well with snowflakes fine,
And soft as eiderdown.

The King has a trusty servant,
Jack Frost is his name; his nose
Is raspberry red, his beard is white,
And stiff as a crutch it grows.

Old Jack is a sturdy good fellow,
And serves their Majesties well;
He's here and he's there, and he's everywhere,
And does more than I can tell.

Each year, as the day comes round,
The king and his royal train
Set off on a tour through the wide wide world,
And sweep over mountain and plain.

His Majesty fails not to visit
Every clime that's not too hot,
To look in upon both high and low,
From the palace down to the cot.

Jack Frost has a busy time then,
But he's helped and advised by the Queen,
That all may be right when the King goes forth,
And everything fit to be seen.

That the King may have pleasant travel,
And no stone hurt his royal toe,
Her Majesty spreads all over the earth,
A carpet of downy snow.

Fine mirrors the King delights in:
None are finer than Jack can make:
And in matchless sheets of crystal clear
He lays them on river and lake.

The trees, all naked and drear,
He robes in the purest white,
And with icicles shining with rainbow hues,
He makes their branches bright.

And for want of buds and blossoms
To strew in his Majesty's way,
With magic flowers of his own device.
He makes the windows gay.

These wonders wrought in a single night
May well excite surprise;
Amazed is the sun when he gets up at dawn,
And he stares with all his eyes.

Then out come all the boys and girls,
Jack's handiwork to view,
And their noses and cheeks turn red
with cold,
Some of them even turn blue.

They pelt each other with snow,
Roll it up in a mighty ball,
And shout and laugh and scamper about,
And heels over head they fall.

They make a huge man of snow,
As grand as a Russian Czar,
A wooden sword in his hand, in his mouth,
A carrot to serve for cigar.

His eyes, his hair, and his beard,
They paint as black as my shoe
With burnt stick, but they spoil his nose,
For they stick it rather askew.

Then what do you think? For a cockshot
They take him; they pelt him and hit;
They knock of the snowman's ears
and nose,
But he does not mind it a bit.

Hurrah! for the good thick ice.
Oh! is n't it jolly? They slide,
They skate, and in sleighs so fine they go,
And swift as the wind they glide.

King Winter laughs at the sport,
Cries "Bravo!" and claps his hands,
And calling in haste for his man,
Jack Frost,
He gives him these commands:

"Go see the papas and mammas,
And bring me word what they say:
Have the children been good and well
behaved,
Since last I came this way?"

The King trims Christmas trees,

To give to good girls and boys,

With tapers and trinkets of silver
and gold,
And all sorts of dainties and toys.

The Queen cuts twigs of birch,

Of birch so supple and keen,

And daintily ties them up into rods

The finest that ever were seen.

Soon with this word to the King
Jack Frost comes back at a trot:
"Good have most of the children been,
But some of them have not."

The King gives him the pretty trees,
The Queen the rods so smart,
And away goes Jack again with his load,
Till every house has its part.

Cakes, mince-pies nuts and apples,
Good children get from the King.
You can guess what the naughty get,
The rods are the only thing.

"Oh dear mamma," cries Jenny,
"Johnny 's been good, and so have I!
Pray tell Jack Frost we don't want the rod,
Oh! do ask him to put it by."

Mamma smiles on her darlings,
They run to her, kiss her, and say:
"How long do you think will it be,
Mamma,
Ere King Winter goes away?"

"He will lay upon Baby's cradle
The snowdrops that early come forth;
And then, my dears, he will bid us
good bye
And go back to his home in the North."

Published by
GUSTAV W. SEITZ
HAMBURG.
ENTD. at Stationer's Hall.